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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BEIJING 003636

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SUBJECT: SCO: PRC VIEWS DUSHANBE SUMMIT AS TURNING POINT  
FOR A MORE MATURE SCO

Classified By: Political Minister Counselor Aubrey Carlson.  
Reasons 1.4 (B/D).

11. (C) SUMMARY: China believes the Shanghai Cooperation Organization's (SCO's) August 28 Dushanbe summit marked a transition to a more "mature" organization that has developed a strong foundation for increasing trust and strategic consultation among members, according to an MFA contact. Security cooperation is at the forefront of China's SCO agenda, including work to confront "new and increasing threats," possibly even outside Central Asia. China wants observer states to play a more active role, but developing a mechanism for admitting new SCO members remains a long-term project. In any case, China would consider the political ramifications of admitting a new member. Iranian President Ahmadinejad was active at the summit, but kept official remarks to "SCO-related" topics, our contact reported. END SUMMARY.

12. (C) MFA European and Central Asian Affairs Department Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Affairs Division Deputy Director Mao Wenchong briefed PolOff September 18 on Chinese views of the August 28 Summit in Dushanbe and trends in the development of the SCO. Mao attended the event in Dushanbe.

13. (C) Drawing heavily from the remarks made by President Hu Jintao at the summit meeting, Mao was upbeat on the results of the summit. He said the meeting increased "mutual political trust" and "strategic coordination" among member states, consequently enhancing stability in the region and supporting mutual development. Mao stressed that the summit demonstrated that the "Treaty on Long-Term Neighborliness, Friendship, and Cooperation of the SCO States" signed in August 2007 formed a "very significant" foundation for cooperation among member countries. Mao said the agreements signed at the Dushanbe Summit, including documents aimed at increasing cooperation on counter-terrorism, arms control and banking, further demonstrate that the SCO is continuing to develop as an organization.

Shift to More "Mature" SCO  
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14. (C) Mao said that as recently as 2007 observers described the SCO as a "young" organization still in the process of developing a framework for coordination and defining its mission. He said the Dushanbe Summit represents a turning point for the organization, which should now be seen as a more "mature" and effective mechanism for increasing

political trust among its member states and taking on a wide portfolio of security, economic and cultural issues.

#### Security Issues Stressed

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15. (C) As a further sign of increasing political trust, Mao pointed to efforts made within the SCO framework to deepen security cooperation in response to "new and increasing shared threats," both in the region and "in the world." Mao cited counter-terrorism efforts, the need for a stable Afghanistan and cooperation in fighting trans-national criminal groups as examples. He stressed the primary importance of security cooperation in the overall SCO mission, noting that the organization's genesis came from the need to confront shared threats to security, particularly terrorism, separatism and extremism. He suggested that the economic and cultural goals of the SCO, while important, are secondary to political and security considerations.

Georgia

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16. (C) On the situation in Georgia and the Summit Declaration that Russia has claimed demonstrates SCO support for their actions there, Mao said that China continues to desire to see the situation resolved through dialogue. Mao emphasized that the French-brokered six-point agreement to resolve the crisis is viewed by China as a welcome step. He stressed that the SCO Declaration was agreed to unanimously by all SCO members, including China.

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#### Observers Should Play More Active Role

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17. (C) Mao reported that China views continued "openness" of the SCO as important. Pressed for clarification, he said this includes creating increased opportunities for observer countries to play a more active role, including in the realm of security cooperation. Mao stressed that the SCO should also continue to develop on the basis of mutual interest and open exchange of ideas among member countries.

#### Mechanism for New Members under Development

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18. (C) Mao said that SCO members discussed in Dushanbe the need to develop a formal mechanism for admitting new members. Current members agreed to establish a working group to investigate the appropriate process for admission and the criteria for membership. Mao stressed, however, that the process of developing such a mechanism would be a "long-term" one and that even the principles for a new membership process are not yet agreed. He added that this mechanism would apply in all cases and will not be aimed at or developed for any particular country. He explained that only once this mechanism has been developed and implemented would the SCO consider full membership of any non-member country.

Iran

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19. (C) Mao acknowledged that Iran remains "very positive" about joining the SCO. However, Mao said China would take into account possible political complications and the potential for "ill effects" that could result from adding new members. He added that decisions to admit new members would require unanimous agreement from current members. Mao pointed out that as the Head of State of an SCO observer nation, President Ahmadinejad participated in the Dushanbe Summit. He noted that Ahmadinejad was very active, in particular in making several proposals for "economic initiatives." Mao stressed that when making his official address to the organization, Ahmadinejad restricted his

remarks to "SCO-related topics."  
RANDT